RESTORATION *Review*

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A "CHURCH OF CHRIST" SHIBBOLETH
by Robert R. Meyers

A SEARCH FOR THE GOOD MAN IN ORIENTAL RELIGIONS
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Let a man overcome anger by kindness, evil by good . . . Victory breeds hatred, for the conquered is unhappy . . . Never in the world does hatred cease by hatred; hatred ceases by love.—BUDDHA

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RESTORATION *Review*

A Quarterly Journal of Philosophy of Restoration

Dedicated to the Task of Defining the
Restoration of Primitive Christianity as the
Spiritual, Moral and Intellectual Ideal of

Modern Man

LEROY GARRETT, *Editor*
CLINT EVANS, *Publisher*

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"It Means What It Says . . ,"

A LOOK AT A "CHURCH OF CHRIST" SHIBBOLETH

By Robert R. Meyers

Imagine a sailing ship trying to escape a crowded harbor for the wide sea. but running repeatedly into a huge rock blocking her exits. The ship is sea-worthy, her sails are generous, the wind blows in the right direction. But she cannot get out upon the open sea because each time she begins to move she smashes into the rock.

The rock that keeps so many of us in the Church of Christ from sailing out of the close harbor is the fallacy that we do not interpret the Bible. We are seaworthy people, with generous impulses and good hearts. The wind is blowing today in the right direction. But every time someone tries to get us to face the open sea, and the life of freedom we were meant for, the rock rears up.

It works this way. We are convinced that while others may interpret the Bible, and get it wrong in the process, we never do so. "We do not interpret it," we say. "We just let it mean what it says, and we do it."

Until this barrier is out of the way, it is almost hopeless to try to tell people that God has not elected our own small group to be the only wise readers of his word. We cannot even talk about the impossibility of our being "infallible interpreters" because the reply comes back at once, "God's word does not have to be interpreted. It means just what it says." After this, it is useless to say that we ought to remember that our interpretations could be wrong, or that the interpretations of others may at least be of equal validity.

What Is Interpretation?

I am persuaded that until one can get a man to see that any attempt to under-stand a spoken or written word is an interpretative act, it is almost hopeless to talk with him about whether his views can bear close scrutiny. As long as he equates his understanding of God's word with that word itself, he is immune to open discussion. Without meaning to, he makes himself equal with God, since only the speaker of words can be expected to be absolutely positive about every nuance of meaning which they may carry. To attack such a man's interpretation is to him like attacking God, or God's word itself, and this he cannot permit. His emotions surge and swirl, and reason is blocked. The good ship flounders again upon the rock.

No one has stated this more succinctly than Carl Ketcherside, who pointed out in his February '62 *Mission Messenger* that our people cannot distinguish between *revelation* and *interpretation.*

"Revelation is what God has said. Interpretation is what men think he meant by what he said. Revelation is divine. It is the disclosure of the infinite mind. Interpretation is the application of the human mind in an attempt to fathom the divine disclosure. We are bound to recognize revelation as our source of authority because of our relationship to God. We are not bound to recognize the interpretation of any man as authoritative to us unless it commends itself as truth to our own mind and conscience. We are not to be judged by any man in that realm because in it no man is master of another."

This is so important that I should be happy to think that my readers would pause right now and read it again, carefully. The interpretive act is constantly required of us. Every utterance, oral or written, is interpreted before it communicates anything. A girl walking home with her boy friend says, "Oh, you're a crazy thing!" From context — from her eyes, voice tone, facial and bodily carriage, comments before and after that remark — from all these, he will make an interpretation of her words.

If his interpretation is extremely literal, and he trusts her absolutely, he may leave at once to apply for admittance to an asylum. If his interpretation is figurative, he may understand the remark to mean, "I don't like you at all," and he may give up this courtship as a hopeless one. Or, if his interpretation is figurative, he may understand the remark to mean, "I adore you, but I won't be sugary about it," and in this case he will thrill with happiness about the arch declaration she has made.

Since the boy will probably be acutely sensitive to context he is likely to make the right interpretation. Yet all of us know that in the history of such relationships, people do constantly misunderstand one another. Two friends discuss, alone, what a third said when they were all together. One is angry, having understood a remark in such a way as to arouse his resentment. The other says, "Oh, I didn't understand him to mean that at all. I thought he meant this." He may win his unhappy friend to a new interpretation of the absent man's remark, or he may not. But the point is that we are constantly involved in putting an interpretation upon people's words, actions, and even upon their silences.

"It Means What it Says"

It would be nonsensical for the two men described above to argue in such a fashion that one says, with red face and bulging neck muscles, "He meant just what he said!" While the other replies with equal fervor, "That's right, he meant just what he said!" as both of them insist that he said completely opposite things. They are going in a circle. The very question to be settled is, What did he "say?" His words may have seemed quite literal, but how much did context modify them? Did he perhaps use irony, intending to be understood exactly opposite from what he said? Did he use hyperbole, intending his hearer to discount a large part of his over-statement? Did he use litotes, intending his hearer to make up for all that was unsaid in his utterance?

How many of us are really aware that the Bible is filled with just such literary devices as are named above? It has simile and metaphor and a host of other non-literal expressions which have to be "interpreted" before the verse can make proper sense. There are places where one who reads woodenly will simply misunderstand, yet he might well argue that any attempt to make him understand was an interpretation and that God's word doesn't have to be interpreted, since it means what it says.

The Bible uses litotes (understatement) and hyperbole (overstatement). It uses anthropomorphism and anthropopathy (the ascription of human form and feeling to God, Who is pure Spirit). It uses oxymoron and irony, personification and satire. It employs so many single and double puns that this writer has attempted an essay on that subject alone. Every one of these devices calls for interpretation by the reader, lest the point be lost. If one writes irony and a reader fails to interpret ironically, a completely opposite point may be made from the one intended.

The truth is that the act of understanding any word or series of words is an act of interpretation, and the sooner we can stop saying that "we do not interpret," the sooner we will be able to understand our religious neighbors who differ with us. And when we understand them, we will be able to talk with them much more effectively about whose interpretation seems most likely to be right.

The only reason that it is convenient for us to ignore this truth is that when we admit men interpret, and interpret honestly in different ways sometimes, our theory about the Bible is spoiled. We prefer to think of it as a very simple book which all men could see exactly as we do, if they were only honest and sincere. We are not deterred from this view even when we see all our college bookstores offering shelves upon shelves of commentary upon every page of that "simple" book. We are led to write little essays about How We Can All See Alike, ignoring the massive weight of evidence provided for us by the early church, by centuries of Christian experience, and by our own daily experience in every walk of life.

There is no difference between the communication of God to man, and that of man to man, except that God communicates in order to help us have wisdom, happiness and salvation, and we may trust Him to have perfect motives. There is no word in the Bible which does not require interpretation before it communicates. This may sound like overstatement, because we do not commonly recognize it. The interpretive act is often automatic. Thousand of words, and hundreds of simple statements, are used repeatedly until we have stock responses to them. The interpretation has become so automatic and subconscious that we are unaware that it is being made. Wiser students learn to reexamine even the stock responses, however, because they have a way of turning out to have been made too easily. This is why students often say, "Oh, I see!" about a verse they have read a hundred times before. Suddenly, they glimpse an understanding of that verse which had

never occurred to them before. Their interpretation of it has now been modified. But before this discovery happens to people, they may find it hard to believe that consciously or not, they "interpret" everything they read before it has any meaning.

To say, then, that the Bible "means what it says" is simply to talk in circles. Of course it "means what it says" if you know what it "says." But knowing what it "says" is the interpretive act. And since the interpreter is human and fallible, the possibility is always present that he may not have gotten "what it says" exactly right. The Bible "says" something different to one who approaches it after years of serious preparation and earnest prayer than it does to one who reads it in the most desultory fashion. It "speaks" with every possible degree of clarity and relevance, depending upon the preparation and receptivity brought to it by the reader.

Infallible Interpretation?

It has often been pointed out that of all Protestant groups we are probably most like the Roman Catholic folk whom we have wrestled so arduously over the years. We protest against their infallible interpreter, the pope. No man has a right, we say, to give his own, single interpretation of what the Bible says. This is dogmatic and authoritarian.

But we turn around and substitute an infallible interpretation to which all men must bow or be charged with insincerity or indifference. We believe sincerely that we have no popes among us, but our infallible interpretations are given to us by our name preachers and our brotherhood journals, and their power is almost absolute. Anyone within an area of journal influence who dares to think for himself, who arrives at an interpretation or understanding different from that of the party of that area, will find himself ostracized, excommunicated, boycotted, and out of business. If you think the charge is not true, or is exaggerated, there are many ministers who could furnish case histories. There is really no difference between the pressure exerted by an infallible interpretation, to which all men must submit or be called unsound, and the pressure exerted by an infallible interpreter.

We cannot ever really understand our intelligent and sincere religious neighbors until we realize that the problem of interpreting is complicated by many factors. The bringing of a right spirit is one of the most helpful things a man can do. Harry Emerson Fosdick once said that it is "not so much what life brings to us in her hands as what we bring to life in our spirits that makes the difference between people." This is true of Bible reading also. In Numbers 14:24 we learn why Caleb had a different interpretation of his spying trip into Canaan. It was because he had "a different spirit."

But when we find men whose spirit is obviously as dedicated and sincere as our own, and they still interpret differently, we are driven to conclude that there must be other factors which complicate interpretation. For example, a man who has a natural tendency towards asceticism may find it easy to understand that fasting is an irrevocable

commandment of God for all Christians. He will cite Christ's anticipation of our fasting in Matthew 6:16. He will point to the examples of Christ, Paul and Barnabas, the Antioch church, and others, as proof of the widespread practice of this discipline. Some of us who lack the ascetic tendency may try to argue that this was a "custom," but that we do not have to observe it today. He will promptly challenge us to show how we prove one thing a custom, and another thing an eternal law, and charge us with "interpreting." And that is precisely what we will have done, whether we deny it or not. Our interpretation may be better than his, but until we can confess graciously that both of us have brought our best interpretive skill to the passages in question, and differed, we can never really be a part of the whole human family.

Difficulty in Interpretation

Any college teacher of literature is singularly blessed with opportunities to learn about the interpretive act. Under a controlled classroom situation he is able to see how widely students of sincerity and intelligence may differ in their understanding of the written word. I frequently hand out short stories or poems to my students in those areas of study and call for the best interpretation they can give. Since their grades depend on doing well, they work hard. From my vantage point, I watch them concentrate studiously, laboring far harder than most church people ever labor over the reading of the Bible. But when they have finished, I find their grades ranging from A to F. Some who have worked hardest interpret in ways which I, as a more experienced reader, think are quite implausible or clearly not supported by textual evidence. Others, more fortunate in past training and experience and innate abilities, interpret in ways that seem to me good. It is clearly a matter of my interpretation against theirs, and I confess this quite frankly to them. But I then try to show that one interpretation may be much more plausible than another. I do not always succeed in making my point, and without question I am sometimes in the wrong. I give a grade, because it is a school and not the kingdom of God, but in the kingdom of God where the judgment is perfect and where mercy is above judgment, each one will be judged in terms of his capacity. It may well be that in God's perfect judgment, the student who received an F from me would get an A for having done more with his severely limited talents than the better student did with his. Schools cannot operate this way, but we may all thank God daily that perfect wisdom shall one day judge our efforts as His creation.

Another factor complicating interpretation is that all of us tend to see what-ever we go to see. This has been proved so many times that it should be a surprise to no one any more. Permit me to give the most recent example I know about.

Some of my students were reading an O. Henry short story. It happened that my two best students had an identical experience with a passage which told of some transients in a cheap rooming area. The passage read: "They sing Home Sweet Home in ragtime; they

carry their lares et penates in a bandbox; their vine is entwined about a picture hat; a rubber plant is their fig tree." The students all missed the Biblical allusions, but were unaware of it. They did know, how-ever, that "lares et penates" was an unfamiliar expression. They looked it up. Since O. Henry had been talking about "unfurnished rooms," and had mentioned this several times earlier, they were psychologically prepared to have "lares et penates" mean something akin this. So when they looked at the definition in the dictionary, my two best students saw "household goods" very clearly. They put this on their papers. Later, I had to force them to look again in class before they would believe that the definition really read, "household gods." What a marvelous illustration of our faculty for seeing what we expect to see. They had not intended to be wrong; they were not malicious. Both wanted good grades, and customarily got them. But they were victimized by one of the oldest of interpretation problems.

The word *baptizo* in its English forms is defined in dictionaries as immersion, sprinkling, or pouring. We are quite certain that this is a poor definition, but it does us no good to accuse a man of sheer stubbornness because he has not yet been able to accept only the definition of a Greek lexicon The word "baptize" in English has to be interpreted, and we are properly eager that it be interpreted correctly. We have to help people overcome a language gap, a cultural gap, a geographic gap, and a historic gap. We have to tell them that to interpret "baptize" by its present English definition is to miss the proper meaning. We can hope that they see this, but if they try hard and do not, we might at least be as charitable as Campbell was in the *Millennial Harbinger,* Vol. 8, p. 411.

> I cannot, therefore, make anyone duty the standard of Christian state or character, not even immersion . . . and in my heart regard all that have been sprinkled in infancy without their own knowledge and consent, as aliens from Christ . . . Should I find a Pedobaptist more intelligent in the Christian Scriptures, more spiritually-minded and more devoted to the Lord than a Baptist, or one immersed on a profession of the ancient faith, I could not hesitate a moment in giving the preference of my heart to him that loveth most. Did I act otherwise, I would be a pure sectarian, a Pharisee among Christians . . . And while I would not lead the most excellent professor in any sect to disparage the least of all the commandments of Jesus, I would say to my immersed brother as Paul said to his Jewish brother who gloried in a system which he did not adorn: 'Sir, will not his un circumcision, or un-baptism, be counted to him for baptism? and will he not condemn you, who, though having the literal and true baptism, yet dost transgress or neglect the statutes of your King?'

It has puzzled some that Campbell could contend so brilliantly for immersion as the Scriptural mode of baptism, and yet extend such charity as this. He is obviously willing to view as a Christian brother a man whose baptism had not been administered in a way Campbell thought proper, provided the man was obviously sincere and spiritually-minded. The only explanation I can give for this is that Campbell understood the difficulties which

lie in the path of interpretation. He dedicated his life to make the Bible as plain as he could, but he knew all the while that some people would never be able to see it as he did. The most unfortunate thing that ever happened to the Restoration Movement is that most of his heirs lost his capacity for understanding that training, opportunity, experience, health, and innate mental ability may vastly complicate the task of interpreting the word of God.

How Shall We Interpret This?

Actually, most of us recognize the problems of interpretation when we see them in what we call non-doctrinal passages. We know that in 1 Thessalonians 4:4 *skeuos* may mean body, vessel, or wife, but this does not alarm us because it is not concerned with some practice which makes us distinctive from all other religious groups. In such a passage we can even say in the classroom, "How shall we interpret this?" and no one is upset. But on our own distinctive understandings of required ritual and teaching, we are quite unwilling to admit that some of our proof texts are susceptible of another plausible interpretation for some people.

The problem may be syntactical. The words themselves may be clear enough, but we may be unsure about the relationship between them, and the obscurity may cause differences in understanding. When the New English Bible translates Gal. 4:6 "To prove that you are sons," and Phillips translates "It is because you are really His son," neither is being hard-headed. There *is* a difficulty in syntax which causes these radically differing translations.

The problem may lie in the inadequacy of some English words. The Greeks had four words for love: *eros, philia, storge,* and *agape.* One had to do with physical love, one with friendship, one with family affection, and one with what I can best call "deep and abiding concern, regardless of whether the beloved is worthy or even likeable." We have only one word in English, and we use it to say that we *love,* music, a friend, bike riding, or Nanette the poodle.

People who read the greatest commandment will need to know this if they are to interpret it properly. Ministers often spend hours explaining just how Christian love is different from some of the emotions included in the English word today. It would be absurd to say to one, "Well, it says to love, and it means what it says. Why bother people with these interpretations?" No one can really appreciate the single most important, and most amazing, imperative in Christianity until someone has helped him interpret the word "love" in an enriched way. Consider the following:

The Interpreter's Bible gives four possible interpretations for Gal. 6:16. Which one should we insist upon?

Take a secret ballot among your Christian friends on what the “idle word” (KJV) or “thoughtless word (NEB) or “careless word” (PHILLIPS) of Matt. 12:36 means.

How does one interpret the passages dealing with the sin against the Holy Spirit? What is the unpardonable sin? Who is the “man of sin” in 2 Thessalonians? If every member of a loyal Church of Christ were to write his own individual commentary on the New Testament, how divergent would interpretations be? If there were unanimity on a few points, would it be due to the unquestioned clarity of the Bible of every reader, or to the constant reiteration of a particular interpretation by the preachers of the congregation?

How have you understood Gal. 5:12 in the KJV? Turn to Moffatt, Goodspeed, Weymouth, the New English Bible, and see how differently you had “interpreted” it from the way it is clearly to be understood in those versions.

In Romans 1:29 “debate” is listed as a wicked thing. How do we “interpret” this in the KJV so as to justify our own public religious discussions? Can we see how a man who had been told that *we* do not interpret the Bible might think that we do it, after all, when it suits our purposes?

When Paul says that women should not wear gold or pearls, shall we understand this to mean an eternal commandment? Or do we interpret it to mean that it was wrong then, but all right now? Do we quarrel with those who interpret it to mean that women should *still* not wear these things? Can we understand how a man who took Paul literally here, when we do not, might wonder how we could be so insistent that the word “burial” be taken literally in Romans 6:4?

Enough of these. The Bible is full of them, and we ought never again to write glibly of how easy it would be for all men to see as we do, if they were only honest. We like to talk of the vitality of early Christianity, but we easily forget (or we have not learned) that its vitality was equaled by its lack of uniformity in opinion. There were rival apostolic traditions, stemming from Paul and from the Palestinian emphasis. There were problems of interpretation growing from Jewish and Gnostic theories of doctrine and practice. One could go into a city, especially in Asia Minor, and find in the church the mystic and the millenarian, the martyr and the conformist, the legalist and the libertarian. The disunity in opinion was staggering, but Christianity survived because there were enough men always who understood that there may be unity in diversity so long as men are committed with heart and soul to the same Lord.

The time-worn Church of Christ shibboleth, “it means what it says” is a real anachronism in the twentieth century, and does our great cause no good. Once we admit the truth, that we interpret to the best of our ability, then we can accept it that our religious neighbor interprets to the best of his. From that point, we can have rational and friendly discussion of differences, with mutual profit. So long as we say glibly that there is no

problem at all in understanding as we do, provided people will just be honest, we will continue to alienate the wisest and best of men from our program.

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WHAT KIND OF UNITY DO WE SEEK?

Fred Thompson, Jr.

Concern for the unity of all God's people is inherent in the ethos of the Restoration Movement. Our leaders of the last century were deeply distressed over the dismemberment of the Body of Christ by the denominational system. They wept over the lack of fraternity between those who confessed loyalty to the same Savior and professed obedience to the same Lord. They determined to take measures toward the healing of this bleeding wound in the church.

These insightful men issued a call for a movement within the church (discernible as genuinely existing under the unlovely overgrowth of sectarianism) to rediscover and restore the *bene esse* of the original apostolic church. Theological traditions and creedal formulas, though undeniably meaningful and valuable, were respectfully put to one side. The authoritative resource to which all questions relating to salvation and the nature of the church were referred was the New Testament. Jesus Christ was acknowledged as Lord of the church, the New Testament as the vehicle of His authority. The one definitive source of information and guidance for Christians was the divinely inspired record of the Church's founding and early history. Only apostolic standards were to be regarded as normative for the faith and life of the church in all subsequent time.

Thus the Restoration Movement began in an effort to re-focus the attention of divided Christendom on the origins of the church. It was a plea to reconsider the nature of the church. It was a call to recover its essential character and to reproduce its blessed fruits. On this basis it was believed that the people of God could unite and the broken segments of the church be restored into a perfect whole.

The Campbells did not intend nor desire to effect another division in the church of Christ. They and their brethren assumed separate identity only after years of fellowship within the Baptist communion and only after tensions created by this association became irritants provoking controversy and strife. At this point the Restoration Movement ceased to be a movement *within the* church and became another fragment of the whole, but with this significant difference . . . it was a fragment protesting against the fragmentation of Christ's followers and fervently praying for unity on the biblical and Catholic ground. This remains the anomalous status of our people within Christendom. We do not claim to be the whole body of Christ. We are not the only Christians. We are an identifiable religious

communion, distinct from other religious communions, and thus only a fraction of the church. Our separate existence as a people is somewhat mitigated by the fact that we have never been content with this situation nor have we ceased to plead for the recovery of the wholeness of the original church, a restoration of the apostolic faith.

Our current status as a Christian body, separate from other Christian groups, brings us face to face with some uncomfortable facts. These we should be willing seriously and penitently to face.

Fact: Despite our historic commitment to the enterprise of unity our own fellowship has been split with one overt and one incipient schism. Either we have not found the key to unity or we have not learned properly to employ it.

Fact: We have been, and are, afflicted by two divergent attitudes which have developed into sharply contrasting positions in this century --- the liberal attitude which has discarded the concept of restoration as illusory and invalid, and the creedal attitude which has created an unwritten set of dogmas against which to measure the orthodoxy of brethren and by which to survey the boundaries of fellowship. This latter includes a uniform theory of the inspiration of Scripture, a congregational ecclesiology, and a methodology of missions. (None of these items was regarded as essential to the unity of the church by our early leaders).

Fact: We have adopted a *de facto* sectarian posture while loudly denying that we are a denomination. We have “our” literature, “our” Bible Colleges, “our” conventions. Moreover, we take typical sectarian pride in the statistics compiled under each of these categories.

Fact: We have created the impression amongst our religious neighbors that we think we have essentially restored the New Testament church. That the job is done. That we have found the pattern and have reproduced it without serious flaws. What they must do is to become like us in every respect.

Fact: We exhibit an intellectual and theological complacency which appears to stem from our confidence that all the answers to the religious difficulties in Christendom were given by our nineteenth-century giants. (We have not produced many twentieth-century giants). Therefore, we need not engage in the theological dialogue now taking place in the world. We need not undertake a serious and continuous restudy of the Scriptures in the light of the data furnished by recent historical and biblical scholarship.

Fact: In the great swelling tide of ecumenical interest in the modern world, the little eddy of our movement is scarcely noticed. We are not even addressing ourselves to this development for which our founding father prayed.

In the light of these facts, brutally but honestly stated, a penetrating question emerges: What kind of unity are we calling for? Do we deep down believe that Presbyterians, Methodists, Episcopalians, etc., must join us in order to effect Christian unity? Have we

become the beau ideal for Christendom? Do we contend that there is no true church except that which practices congregational autonomy, engages only in "independent" missionary ventures, identifies itself by the name "Christian Church"? I think we would not so affirm. Dearly as we may cherish these and other features of our brotherhood life, we confess that they are not of the esse of the church. They are therefore not germane to the quest for Christian unity. Only that which is of the essence of the church is essential to unity.

The Nature of The Church

The Christian *ecclesia* mentioned in the gospels and described in the early chapters of Acts was not identical with the church which is spoken of in the Pauline epistles. It was an almost entirely unstructured fellowship of disciples of Christ. Christ was the magnetic living center of an assembly of men and women drawn to Himself in utter commitment. Faith in Christ as the only Son of God, Savior and Lord, and mutual love, loyalty and respect were the cohesive factors binding them together. "Fellowship" is the word most descriptive of the ecclesia. There were no institutional forms, no organizational patterns, no doctrinal catechisms to distinguish Christ's followers. There was rather the living body of Christ, quickened and ordered by the Holy Spirit, a *koinonia* of faith, hope and love. To be called by the Lord Christ from a world dying of sin's fatal infection into the deathless Kingdom of heaven, to receive forgiveness of sins and to become an incarnation of the Holy Spirit, to join one's life to other lives similarly redeemed and vitalized, was to become a member of the fellowship. All of the terms descriptive of the life of the *ecclesia* are dynamic, living, incandescent terms.

It was a fellowship of flaming faith, of quenchless love, of intrepid loyalty. It was a *way* in which the disciples were traveling, a way of holiness and righteousness that led to eternal life. They were a witnessing community, manifesting the transforming grace of Christ in lives made radiant and transparently new by the power of the Spirit. Prayer, disciplined learning at the apostles' feet, and table fellowship were the hallmarks of their corporate life. To know Christ was their heart's desire, to follow Christ their passionate determination, to bear testimony to Christ their supreme vocation.

The baptismal experience which brought them into the Christian fellowship was not a formal institutional sacrament hedged about with ecclesiastical sanctions, but an exquisitely personal and spiritual co-inherence with the Savior in an imagery of death and resurrection. It was in very truth a new birth, life from the dead, crucifixion and re-animation. Those whom sin had slain presented themselves in contrite faith at the baptismal waters for interment. God brought them forth from this death-sealing immersion bearing the infant form of new divine life, quickened out of the corpse of sinful selfhood, freshly and eternally alive unto the Father in Christ Jesus, the Son. Baptism was into Christ, i.e., into His body, the dynamic fellowship of those reborn from the dead. It was the

springing fountain of a stream of endless miraculous consequences --- forgiveness of sins, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, inclusion in the fellowship of saints, inheritance of life everlasting.

The Lord's Supper was not a frosty ceremony regulated by the canons of hierarchical procedure, administered by officially qualified and credentialed "priests." It was rather a *eucharist,* a solemn and moving thanksgiving to the Father for the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ displayed on the Cross. It was a communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, a commitment of life to the redemptive mission which brought Him to His Cross. It was a sacrament of remembrance of something done, once and for all, in time and space, by virtue of which sinners may become saints. It was a sacrament of refreshment and renewal, the feeding of the soul on divine nutrients without which we become stuporous and moribund.

These two decisive and crucial experiences of the New Testament Christians were by no means perfunctory rituals recommended by a religious institution. They were not merely means to membership in a cultic group. They were, and are, intrinsic to the essence of the Christian faith, unifying the believer with the Lord of the church and sustaining the union thus created. Traditional and institutional Christianity has overlaid the sacraments with stultifying dogma, a development which has concealed their true redemptive and regenerative character from millions of honest believers.

The word of God, by the hearing of which men are brought to faith, is a constitutive element of the church. It has pleased God to communicate the good news of His grace by the preaching of men. Where the word of God is truly preached and obeyed in faith, there is the church. The church is created by the word, of which the sacraments are multidimensional expressions. Word and sacrament amplify, illustrate, and intensify each other. They are not two divine entities but one. These are the authentic marks of the Christian *ecclesia,* the Christian church.

Approaches to Christian Unity

Unhappily, these vital and essential divine powers ebbed early in the history of the church. Men grasped for security by replacing them with vastly inferior forms. As Emil Brunner observed "The living Word of God is secured, and at the same time replaced, by theology and dogma; the fellowship is secured, and replaced, by the institution; faith, which proves its reality by love, is secured and replaced by a creed and a moral code.." *(The Misunderstanding of the Church, p.* 53) The triumph of the institutional concept of the church profoundly affected the nature of the approaches to unity throughout the entire history of Christendom.

The first kind of attempt to stem the tide of divisive influence in the history of the church was creedal definition. It was thought that by defining the orthodox Catholic faith heresy would die of exposure. Athanasius was hopeful that the Arians would renounce their Christological error and embrace anew the true faith. He was disappointed. Exclusion of heretics by theological confessions did not serve them and never has served since to heal divisions in the church. To insist on doctrinal agreement as a condition of unity is to predetermine failure. Every discovery of a neglected doctrinal truth becomes the occasion for the formation of a new denomination or sect.

Rome's ascendency to preeminence in the West gave rise to another type of effort to unify the church. Coercive force backed by the authority of the developing hierarchy was employed to whip into line non-cooperating Christians. The Roman church, then as now, saw unity as a possibility only when the papal flag flew over every outpost of the legions of Christ.

The embarrassment occasioned by disunity in the ranks of the Reformation congregations, coupled with an understandable dread of ecclesiasticism, led Luther and Calvin to emphasize the dogma of the Invisible Church. The legacy of this fiction has been dearly cherished by Protestants to this very hour. In the Invisible Church perfect unity already exists. It is to the credit of an increasing number of Protestant communions that they are no longer willing to tranquilize their consciences over their separation from Christian brethren by this expedient. Few will any longer deny that our Lord's prayer for the unity of believers requires visible expression.

Several types of interdenominational associations were developed in the last century, some of which are still alive and breathing. They have served to broaden the range of fraternity but have not been irresistibly effective as instruments of reunion.

Currently the attention of ecumenical enthusiasts is centered on denominational mergers as the *modus operandi* for answering Christ's intercessory prayer. Extend the fences, add new wings to the headquarters building, dilute or delete disputed theological convictions and stand back to let the detached ecclesiastical pilgrims in. This approach tends to reduce Christianity to the lowest common denominator and results in a nondescript religious society. What is more important, it assumes that unity is achieved by organizational inclusiveness. The institutional concept of the church is dominant and decisive. Apostolic norms become obscured by pragmatic considerations and functional requirements in the expanded churchly corporation. The simple outlines of the original church are obliterated by the towering superstructure and the impressive machinery of a great institution.

Our Plea For Unity

What relevant word do we as a people committed to work for Christian unity have to say to a divided but seeking church? I think we still have somewhat to offer.

We have contended that the indispensable items in the church of Christ are those which are necessary for making and keeping a man Christian. What saves us unites us with others who are being saved. No group therefore has the right or authority to impose additional qualifications for membership in the Lord's Body. The consensus of the whole church has always been that four things are essential to man's salvation, the gospel, faith, baptism, and the Lord's Supper: the divine message, the human response, the continuing communion. To this four-fold pillar of evangelical Christianity we seek now to direct renewed attention.

1. The mission of the church is to proclaim the one gracious message in order to elicit the obedience of faith from all who have ears to hear. Let all who love and worship Christ join univocally in the publishing of these glad tidings.

2. We remind the great denominational families that they have kept their fences mended by the retention of theological confessions of faith. For 150 years we have been indefatigable critics of this divisive stratagem. We have maintained that the creed of the first Christians was personal, not doctrinal. It was a confession of faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Alexander Campbell argued that belief in that one fact was the only creedal requirement for admission into the apostolic church. The late Frederick D. Kershner, in his book, *How To Promote Christian Union*, wrote: "Surely the only rational and certain basis for creedal harmony is to return to the apostolic order. The acceptance of this creed does not prevent a man from accepting and believing whatever theology he pleases. He may be a Calvinist or an Arminian, a sacramentarian or a liberal, but if he accepts Jesus with his whole heart as his Lord and Saviour, he is a Christian in addition to, or in spite of, whatever else he may be." (125-6).

We do not require doctrinal impeccability as a term of fellowship between Christians for the simple reason that to do so would exclude everyone who is not infallible. Most of us are in the non infallible category ! We know that we know in part only. It is cause for great rejoicing that the Scriptures make clear that we are not saved by knowledge but by faith in the Son of God. Let all Christians similarly confess. Let us witness together the one good confession which pledges us to Christ in faithful discipleship.

3. We call for sacramental unity as imperative to the mission and harmony of the church. There are four criteria which we regard as decisive in determining the truth of the sacramental practice of any group: (1) the word of Scripture, (2) the example of the original Christianity community, (3) the congruity of form with meaning; (4) the consensus fidelium (the mind of the whole church). New Testament authority, apostolic precedent, theological consistency, and catholicity are gauges which reveal the adequacy

or inadequacy of the baptismal and eucharistic policies of any tradition within the church. We are firmly convinced that the sacramentalism of the people of the Restoration Movement passes all four tests and we plead with earnest believers in all denominations to bring their practices into line with these standards. Indeed, we see no other possibility by which unity on these vital matters may be brought about.

4. We do not advocate the kind of Christian unity which results in organizational uniformity. It has always been our understanding that the church is not at base in institution but a fellowship. The great fact of the church is the Holy Spirit who lives in it and whose power propels it. Unity is created by the Holy Spirit who draws together into one body those who have been begotten again by the word of God and who are made one by the one Lord through One Faith and One Baptism. Members of the community of saints have fellowship one with another because all have been cleansed by the blood of God's dear Son.

Under this conception, Christian recognizes Christian as beloved brother irrespective of the varying institutional stalls in which each feeds his soul. The institution is secondary. The fellowship in Jesus Christ is primary. We shall work and pray toward the end that every institutional form of the church may make visible the one Lord in preaching and sacraments, and the one Spirit in fellowship and fruit. But we shall not withhold our brotherly love until this desired objective becomes historical fact. We do not insist that all institutional and organizational forms except those we have developed be suppressed and exterminated. (Many of them, including our own, may needs to be fumigated and ventilated and inspirited, but not annihilated). We do not demand theological and liturgical uniformity. The spontaneity and variety created by the Holy Spirit must not be smothered.

We do plead for the recovery of the original ecclesia within every tradition in Christendom. We ask the Anglicans to allow their distinctive Angelicanism to diminish so that their common Christian faith and their obedience to New Testament imperatives may increase. We ask the Presbyterians to diminish the place of Calvin in their system in order that the supreme Lordship of Christ may become yet more apparent and real. We ask the Methodists to submerge their Methodism beneath a surging flood of Christ centered witness and loyalty. We ask every denomination and sect to examine its faith and life in the light of the Christian ecclesia of the New Testament. We petition for the removal of those particulars in denominational practices which cannot be justified by Scripture in accordance with the catholic understanding of divine truth. We ask that every sectarian distinctive which is disruptive of the fellowship of Christians be permitted to expire from malnutrition. We call upon every Christian communion to give the positive and unexceptioned adherence to the implied demands of Ephesians 4 to confess one Lord, to cherish One Faith, to practice one Baptism, to recognize and together to become, the One Body of Christ.

Implementing Our Plea

What practical steps can we take to manifest our sincere desire to be used of God's Spirit in the re-gathering of His scattered sheep? First, we can pray. We should have frequent meetings dedicated to the single purpose of praying for the unity of the children of God. Second, we can practice unity up to the limit of available opportunity. We should seek fellowship with every genuinely Christian movement to which we can witness and from which we can learn. One of these is the National Association of Evangelicals which has a statement of faith that is congenial to our own convictions. The one great requirement for membership in N.A.E. is unqualified acknowledgment of the Bible as the inspired Word of God. There is a great opportunity for the witness of our people to New Testament Christianity within the framework of this Association. By the nature of its orientation to biblical faith N.A.E. is open to the plea which we have been so vociferously shouting back and forth to one another and which we ought to articulate outside our own circle.

We can join federation of church in cities and towns where such participation allows us to remain true to our own commitments and loyalties. We can start area fellowships of churches across denominational lines in which people of several different communions are invited on occasion to meet together for worship, prayer and Bible study. We can cultivate the friendship of ministers, and mem-bers of other churches and engage with them in a serious study of revealed truth. We can refuse to be sectarian, isolationist, perfectionist, arrogant, com-placent, omniscient in attitude and disposition. We can weep over our own and other's sins against the Love which wills our oneness in Christ. For the sake of an unbelieving world which can only be brought to faith in Jesus Christ by the witness of a united church, we must and do pledge every effort to this task - "until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

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A Preface to Christian Ethics . . . I

THE SEARCH FOR THE GOOD MAN

By Leroy Garrett

This is intended as the first of several installments of a critical study in Christian ethics. The plan is to explore the history of thought with the idea of ascertaining what great minds have concluded in regards to the ideal man. It will be, therefore, a search for the Good Man.

The following treatment on the concept of the good life in the great oriental religions will be followed by a study of the good man in classical Greek thought, especially such sources as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. The Stoics and the Epicureans will be included, followed by a presentation of the views of some of the medieval thinkers. Such founders of modern thought as Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, Kant, Spinoza will be studied. Even such skeptics and pessimists as Nietzsche and Schopenhauer will be called upon for their description of the Good Man. Some of our modern contemporaries will likewise make their contributions.

The purpose is to study the different views of the Good Man in the history of thought from the Christian point of view. What is the Christian philosophy of the Good Man? Certainly it is Christ-centered, but what is the Christian to say about other moral philosophies? This study will attempt, therefore, to provide a criticism of the many divergent views of the ideal person in the light of the wonderful Person of the Bible. We propose to give the Christian's response to the more influential classical and secular systems of ethical thought.

We hope to include in this series a consideration of certain personal and social ethical problems confronting the Christian, including such topics as the home, vocation, education, sin, fear, anxiety, self-fulfillment. We also plan to postulate our own view of the nature of man, and to show how such principles as love and freedom are necessary to the good life.

The plan calls for all these installments to be used ultimately in book form under some such title as *A Preface to Christian Ethics,* which we trust will be suitable for classroom use in high school and college courses in Ethics. It is our conviction that Ethics is too often taught with too little regard for Christian thought. Some college texts make no reference at all to Jesus or to Christian ethics! Those that do include references to Christian morality fail to give it proper emphasis. Few books in moral philosophy are written from the Christian perspective.

The first installment on the oriental views of the Good Man lacks only our analysis of Hinduism and other philosophies of India, which will appear later, or at least it will form a part of the completed book.

Our reason for presenting such material to readers of this journal is that we believe that disciples generally do not think along these lines enough. Ethics is surely one of the neglected areas of Christian study, especially among our people. Our pioneers were very conscious of the moral imperatives of the Christian faith. Alexander Campbell, for instance, penned extensive essays on moral culture, some of them running through many installments. In the mean-time both our thinking and our morals have grown rather shoddy. We trust this series may resume what the pioneers started, and thus help to create a higher sense of values and more moral sensitivity, both from a historical and a personal point of view.

Confucianism: The Gentleman

This account of man's search for the ideal person begins with Confucius, the Chinese sage whose moral teachings have affected one-fourth of the people of the world for upward of 2500 years. His moral philosophy was the first systematic ethic, a truly serious and painstaking effort to spell out in detail the traits of the Good Man.

Confucius was one of the great teachers. He reminds one of Socrates in that his manner was informal, and because he was a great question-asker. His knowledge was so vast that he has been called a one-man university. Young men from all parts of China who heard of his "well-furnished mind" flocked to him. He and his students lived and worked together somewhat like Jesus and his disciples. At one time Confucius had seventy young men living in his home. He claimed to have instructed 3,000 men in his freelance manner, many of whom moved on to important positions in the world. He was a strict teacher and did not hesitate to send a lazy student home with a blow from his staff.

He would tell his students: "Hard is the case of him who will stuff himself with food the whole day, without applying his mind to anything." And yet he was more exacting of himself than anyone else. Fame and fortune could have been his for the asking had he been willing to compromise his convictions. He chose instead his integrity and continued as a teacher of virtue, but not without severe deprivation. Like Jesus he sometimes had no place to lay his head ("my bended arm for a pillow") and his food was often no more than bread and water.

Early in life Confucius tried the way of fame. He successively became chief magistrate, commissioner, and minister of crime of one of the Chinese towns. According to tradition an epidemic of honesty swept through the city while Confucius was in the government. His life was so influential that articles of value dropped in the street and were left untouched or returned to the owner. James Legge in his *Chinese Classics* quotes the Chinese records as saying: "Dishonesty and dissoluteness were ashamed, and hid their head. Loyalty and good faith became the characteristics of the men, and chastity and

docility those of the women. Strangers come in crowds from other states. Confucius became the idol of the people."

The little Chinese paradise ended when a neighboring ruler became jealous and fearful of its rising power and managed to divert Confucius into other activity by seducing his superior, the Duke of Lu, by means of lovely girls and beautiful horses. Even at this early date in history prostitution was already an old profession in China. It was still prospering in 1400 A. D. when Marco Polo laid the first western eyes on Kublai Khan's capital and reported among other things that the prostitutes of the Khan's court were "incredibly numerous and ravishingly beautiful."

Prostitution was a licensed profession regulated by the state, the most beautiful of the women being supplied without charge to members of foreign embassies, There were the "sing-song girls," a special variety of charmers who could provide intellectual conversation as well as sex appeal. They were trained in literature and philosophy as well as music and the dance.

In respectable families chastity was rigidly maintained among the girls, who were taught that it was a shame should a man even touch them. Girls have been known to kill themselves because of the accidental touch of a man. The boys however lived on a different standard, for no effort was made to preserve purity among them. The Chinese thought of sex in the male as an appetite like hunger that could honorably be satisfied at brothels. It was improper for a man to have such relations with a respectable woman. The state supplied prostitutes in large numbers to satisfy men's passion, and it was considered proper and legitimate for them to visit the houses of lewdness so long as they were moderate.

Confucius sought to foster a constructive ethical philosophy in a Chinese culture that had long been weakened by anarchy, oppression, and moral corruption. Political and social institutions had not preserved justice, and the rulers of the people had become corrupt, being more concerned with self-aggrandizement than with moral leadership. It was in this context that Confucius endeavored to define *a gentleman.* The *gentleman* is variously described by the sage as "Superman" and the "Higher Man."

The Chinese gentleman has three supreme virtues: intelligence, courage, and good will. Confucius measured these virtues in terms of perfection. The ideal man is both a saint and a philosopher; he has character as well as intelligence. Sincerity is the basis of his character; he is never deceptive; he has an overflowing sympathy towards all men; he is courteous and affable; he ignores slander and violent speech; he is discriminate in his praise; he seldom speaks, but when he does he makes his words count; he is not jealous of the excellencies of other men.

The sage contended that government could be redeemed and the family preserved only by the rule of gentlemen. Obedience is the basic principle of an orderly society: children who are obedient to their parents, wives to their husbands, subjects to the monarch. Chaos follows anarchy. Obedience in turn is founded upon moral law, the principle of Reason that pervades the universe. As in the case of a man's character, sincerity is the first rule for the king. The ruler must be eminent in moral behavior so that good conduct will flow from him into the lives of the people. He viewed killing on the part of the state as unnecessary and evil. Concerning the ruler's influence on the people Confucius said: "Let him preside over them with gravity, then they will reverence him. Let him be filial and kind to all, then they will be faithful to him. Let him advance the good and teach the incompetent, then they will eagerly seek to be virtuous."

He opposed the luxury of the courts and favored a wide distribution of wealth. He attacked mediocrity, insisting that the talented citizens produce according to their ability. He called for the education of all classes, pointing out that education promotes happiness and good morals. He argued that good manners makes for good government and that if propriety decays the nation decays with it. He looked to music as the elevating influence on the masses: "The best way to improve manners and customs is to pay attention to the composition of the music played in the country . . . Manners and music should not for a moment be neglected by anyone. Benevolence is akin to music. . ."

The Confucian gentleman is universal in outlook. He behaves so as to make his conduct a kind of universal law for all men of all ages. Confucius taught the Golden Rule in its negative form: "Do not do unto others as you would not wish done unto yourself." When Confucius was asked to summarize in one word a rule for the whole of one's life, he replied that *reciprocity* was such a word.

Kindness begets kindness. But how about an injury? An injury is to be recompensed with *justice.*

The gentleman knows the art of reasoning and he realizes that the purpose of speech is to be understood. He avoids obscurity of thought. Confucius viewed insincere and inaccurate speech as a national calamity and as a reason for bad government. Discipline in both speech and manners is the foundation of society. Self-development is the means of social development. The gentleman cultivates himself with reverential care; he has a passion for personal morality. This in turn makes for a stable home, which in turn makes for a stable government. The individual is unhappy, Confucius said, because he is undisciplined; and the world is at war because nations are undisciplined.

The family can be solidified only by each member of the family cleansing his soul of improper desires. This comes through sincere and constructive thinking. By the regulation of self the family is regulated, which in turn regulates society. It is not through virtuous sermonizing or passionate punishments that this is accomplished, but by the silent power

of example itself. Morality will be spontaneous in a social order made up of people who seek impartial knowledge.

It is through moral awareness and commitment that the Confucian gentleman gains self-renewal, which gives him an independence that initiates the regeneration of society. There are three key Chinese words which describe the ideal man. *Li* means propriety or moral order. It is similar to the Greek work *kosmios,* which is used in the New Testament to mean *orderly* (1 Tim. 3:2) and *modesty* (1 Tim. 2:9). It refers to the well-arranged life, one that respects what is proper in all areas of life, including dress, manners, habits.

The second word is *jen,* which means "true manhood" in respect to the way one treats his fellows. It has been translated "man-to-manness." Edwin Burtt in *Man Seeks the Divine* says that the force of *jen* is "knowing when to be sternly just and when to show kindly compassion, when to be trustful and when to be cautious, when to assert a dignified firmness and when to give way to the wishes of others." It suggests *wise adaptability.*

The third word is *shu,* translated *reciprocity,* to which reference has been made. The principle involved here, to quote Burtt again, is that "the superior man creates, so far as in him lies, the moral order that will bring enduring harmony and mutual fulfilment when practiced by others as well as by himself."

With these three qualities the Chinese gentleman is unqualifiedly devoted to the right and his ultimate aim is moral growth and preparation for moral leadership. He does not mistake his true nature to be a quest for wealth, reputation, or power, but rather a commitment to moral law. If he can be his true self he has attained man's greatest achievement. He does not seek a "new birth" in the Christian sense of that term, for he feels no need for a drastic transformation. He has the power within himself to remold his character into what it should be.

A Christian evaluation of the Confucian ethic centers in its interpretation of the nature of man. It is actually humanistic in that it has no frame of reference greater than man. Man is his own god, and he is sufficient within himself to attain moral perfection. To Confucius there is nothing gained by other worldly thinking. Divinity is nothing more than the highest expression of humanity. To the Christian the Confucian philosophy falsifies the nature of man in supposing that he can save himself and in assuming that man is naturally good.

In the early chapters of Romans Paul states his case against such moralists: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3.23). Will Durant in *Our Oriental Heritage* sees Confucian ethics as "a counsel of perfection that forgets that man is a beast of prey." Man simply cannot live up to the perfect standard set by Confucius, just as the Jew could not measure up to the code of Moses. The reason is man's sinfulness. To suppose that man has the power within himself only leads to self-righteousness on one hand and pride on the other. Paul describes the plight of the man who seeks moral perfection by his

own powers: “I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members.”

Then Paul cries, “Wretched man that I am! Who wiII deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Rom. 7). But Confucius had a different view of himself: “At fifteen I began to be seriously interested in study. At thirty I had formed my character. At forty I had no more perplexities. At fifty I knew the will of heaven. At sixty nothing I heard disturbed me. At seventy I could let my thought wander without trespassing the moral law.” Confucius attained such moral heights that he no longer sinned.

The Christian can agree with Will Durant that by means of Confucianism China developed “a harmonious community life, a zealous admiration for learning and wisdom, and a quiet and stable culture which made Chinese civilization strong enough to survive every invasion, and to remould every invader in its own image,” He likewise sympathizes with Durant’s analysis that “no better medicine could be prescribed for any people suffering from the disorder generated by an intellectualist education, a decadent moral code, and a weakened fibre of individual and national character, than the absorption of the Confucian philosophy by the nation’s youth.”

Christian philosophy insists, however, that the Confucian ethic falls short of the Christian ideal. In Confucianism there is little or no place for love, peace, and joy. Because of its lack of tenderness and benevolence it kept women in supine debasement. Its cold perfectionism hindered China’s progress, making it so conservative that it became hostile to change. Perhaps Confucius’ greatest contribution was shifting the Oriental mind from a worship of its dead ancestors to a concern for the living family. He taught the people that their obligation toward the living was more important than their duties to the departed. But Confucianism is weak as both an ethic and a religion in that it has nothing to point man to except the social order itself. To the Christian it illustrates the difference Christ makes!

The present Chinese dictator, Mao Tze-tung rejected Confucianism in his earlier writings as semi-feudal. More recently he has advised his people to read Confucius along with Marx and Lenin. While the Christian would be glad to see Communism imbibe the high moral principles of Confucianism, the fact remains that as a religion there is little in Confucianism that would be offensive to the naturalism, materialism, and atheism of Communism. And the Christian doubts whether any ethic is satisfactory that looks to nothing greater than man for its ideal.

Confucius’ great search for self-understanding, while admirable, was in one important respect a terrible failure, for *he failed to discover man’s sinfulness and inadequacy.* If, like the Greeks and Romans who came after him and like the Jewish prophets who were his

contemporaries, he could have seen God at work in history in behalf of sinful man he too might have anticipated the great day of the Lord in which man would find redemption. It fails as both a religion and an ethic in that it never gets off the ground!

The old sage died in 479 B.C. at the age of 72. His students buried him with pomp and ceremony, and then they built huts by his grave where they lived for three years, mourning for him as for a father. One of them remained several years more after the others had departed, mourning at the tomb alone. Despite the sage's claims of moral perfection, he could do no more than give an incomplete picture of the ideal man. His disciples were left with no vision that reached beyond man, sin, and the grave. Man's search for the good life had little more than a frustrated start.

Buddhism: "The Awakened Man"

Buddhism is the only one of the great religions that is centered in a *rational* attempt to analyze and solve the basic problems of human existence. Judaism is based upon its institutions and ordinances, while Christianity is centered in a Person and in the revelation of God through the church. Confucianism is basically ancestral and Taoism is magical and mystical. Only Buddhism is intentionally and frankly rational. Those characteristics that we expect to find in any great religion — authority, tradition, ritual, miracles, mystery, the sovereignty of God — are almost non-existent in Buddhism. Because of its reluctance to establish rituals and institutions of its own, emphasizing ethics instead, Buddhism is adjudged by some of its critics as a "rational moralism" rather than a religion.

In his *China's Religious Heritage* Y. C. Yang accounts for Buddhism's success in China on the grounds that it deals so directly with what it considers the basic problem of life — *human suffering.* Life is pictured as a sea of suffering where men are tossed, helpless and hopeless, on the angry billows of the stormy ocean. Yang points out that the Buddhist philosophy is an invitation to escape. "Life is suffering" says the Buddhist. "So indeed have I found it" says man in his desperation. Then the Buddhist replies: "Follow me, for I have found the way of escape."

Buddhists found their ideal man in the person of Buddha himself, and it was in his exemplary life that they found the way of escape. Edwin Burtt refers to two significant facts about Buddha: (1) his complete renunciation of worldly interests in order to attain illumination, and (2) his whole-souled commitment to the salvation of others as well as himself, in a sense of loving oneness of all living creatures. Burtt thus describes him as "a pioneering lover of men and a philosophic genius rolled into a single vigorous and radiant personality."

Siddhartha Gautama was born around 500 B.C. of royalty in Benares, India. He grew up in luxury: "I wore garments of silk and my attendants held a white umbrella over me." He was handsome, rich, and gifted. He married a beautiful princess and he was heir to his

father's throne. But he turned his back on all this to enter upon a career of renunciation of worldly things. He went into the forest, the accepted haunt of those in India who become disenchanted with the lure of the world, to begin his search for the eternal verities.

Gautama's father turned every stone in an effort to keep him from going astray. He outdid Solomon in providing 40,000 dancing girls and three palaces for his son's entertainment. Since Gautama was so sensitive to the sufferings of men, his father ruled that no form of ugliness, pain, sickness, disease, old age, or death was to pass before the young man's eyes. Despite the father's efforts, the son became so disturbed over the pain, sorrow, sickness, and death that plagued man that he set out to find the answer to human suffering. It was through his experience with the evil in the world that he found "the four noble truths" of Buddhism. Through these truths he became *the awakened one* or *the enlightened one,* and hence came to be called the Buddha.

These four truths, which can be viewed as pre-requisites in the life of the Good Man, are as follows:

1. *The problem of unhappiness is the universal problem of life.*

In plain English the Buddha is saying that life is a hard deal for all of us. Even those that may escape sickness, poverty, and pain throughout their lives must nonetheless pass through the throes of old age and death. This is a world of woe; life is difficult and traumatic. The first big step toward understanding is to realize that *suffering* is the basic ingredient of this thing called life.

2. *Selfish craving is the cause of the misery in the world.*

It is the inordinate desires that pull us away from the wholeness of things into the shell of self. Separateness is the cause of woe, for life is one. When man understands, he will treat others as brothers, as extensions of himself. Huston Smith in *The Religions of Man* suggests that one's concern for self may be reflected in the way he will look at a group photograph to see how his own face came through before turning to the effectiveness of the photograph as a whole. "It is a little point," Smith observes, "yet a telling symptom of the devouring cancer that lies at the root of all our sorrow." Buddha is saying that this is why men suffer. Few men are as concerned about the hunger of the world as he is that his own children not go hungry. Rare indeed is he who is more concerned for the betterment of the whole world than that his own salary be raised. It is because man coddles self to the neglect of the eternal that this is the world of woe.

3. *Escape from selfish craving will release one from suffering.*

The condition described above can be overcome through self-discipline. Man has the power within himself to escape the narrow confines of his own ego and soar into the vast expanse of universal life.

4. *There is a way (an eight-fold path) whereby one can find release from selfish craving and find eternal happiness.*

It is in this eight-fold path that we have more specific reference to the Buddhist concept of the Good Man. They are as follows:

(1) *Right understanding*. Even though Buddhism has no formal creed or set of doctrines, it still insists that there are truths to be understood and believed. These are mainly the four noble truths. But Buddha also spoke of man's need to understand the power of "the company of the holy." He stressed the importance of associating with the right people, "right association" becoming a preliminary step to the eightfold path. The best way to train a wild elephant, he pointed out, is to yoke it to one that is already trained.

(2) *Right purpose*. If the first path teaches one to get his thinking right, the second tells him to get his heart right. It calls for consistency of intent. Men who achieve eminence are those who have their hearts set on the one thing that matters most.

(3) *Right speech*. Not only is one to guard his words, but he is to become more aware of the motives that lie behind what he says. Speech is often self-deceiving, for we seek to "explain away" what we really are. We likewise deceive others because we do not want them to know our true character. Proper speech patterns enable us to move in the right direction in all of life's experiences.

(4) *Right conduct*. This begins with introspection, for as one understands himself aright, so is he able to behave nobly. Buddha was more like Socrates than any founder of a world religion. He could have said as well as the old Greek philosopher that "the unexamined life is not worth living." Once more Buddha emphasized a scrutiny of motives, insisting that his disciples understand *why* they behave as they do. Buddhism has few explicit commandments, but it does have the Five Precepts, which are similar to the latter half of the Ten Commandments, being proscriptions against killing (not even animals), stealing, lying, unchasity, drinking intoxicants. One European ruler is reported to have refused to lend his influence to either Islam or Buddhism because they ruled against drinking. He turned to Christianity instead!

(5) *Right vocation*. Buddha ruled out poison-peddling, slavery, prostitution, and even brewing, butchering, armament manufacturing, and collecting taxes! In a similar way Luther accepted the hangman as having an honorable occupation but rejected the speculator. The important point about this step of the eight-fold path is that the disciple be conscious of his vocation, to make sure that it is kept a means rather than the end itself.

(6) *Right effort*. Buddha pointed his disciples to the example of the ox who marches through the deep mire carrying a heavy load. Even though he is tired, he persists until his task is done. So man must remember that "passion and sin are more than filthy mire and that you can escape misery only by earnestly and steadily thinking of the Way."

(7) *Right alertness*. Man is to be aware of what he is about and what is happening to him. Greatness is in proportion to one's self-understanding. So one must see a thing as it really is. Events in our life are to be analyzed rationally, not emotionally. To do this one

needs to set aside a time for self-exploration and meditation. Buddha recommended that his disciples periodically withdraw for several days at a time for silent meditation and solitude. Alertness calls for a steady awareness that requires practice.

(8) *Right concentration*. The Buddhist mind is taught to make the most of each experience. Man is to have adventure into higher and higher levels of absorptions. It is when man begins to realize the futility of worldly desires that he has his first foretaste of deliverance. It is when he escapes from delusion, craving, and hostility that he sees reality. It is the mind that is out-of-focus with things as they really are that is weighed down with fear. It is through absorption of the good and the true that deliverance comes.

Buddha is described as "the man who woke up," and this is a fitting summary of the good man according to Buddhism. Goodness is enlightenment, a concept not unlike the "knowledge is virtue" of classical Greek philosophy. Enlightenment to Buddha meant gentleness, good will, strength, sympathy, and friendliness, and he himself was all this. And yet he was a thinker — "a thinker of unexcelled philosophic power" — to quote Edwin Burtt again.

The good life to a Buddhist might be described in terms of the absent-minded professor who, while present in this world, lives in a world of thought. Buddhists are well versed in the art of meditation and reflection. Charity and almsgiving are highly respected virtues. Kindness is thought of as the way to impart happiness; compassion as the means of remove suffering.

The Christian philosopher will be critical of the Buddhist view that the good life can be realized without any reference to God or to anything that transcends human experience. The Four Noble Truths and the Eight-Fold Path are entirely man's doings. There is indeed no frame of reference in Buddhism bigger than man himself. It is in this respect humanistic in its ethic, and insofar as it has a theology it is pantheistic. The Christian would ask the Buddhist if it is indeed within man's power to direct his own way. Is reason enough? Is man capable of bridling his desires merely by appealing to his rational powers? Has not experience taught us that the more man gets the more he wants, and that man's effort to control his passions by his own strength alone is futile?

The Good Man of Buddhism is nobly described. He is deeply sensitive to the suffering of the world, and he is dedicated to the alleviation of human misery. Its tragic fallacy is to suppose that humanity has no problems that are too big for its own rational powers. It overlooks the sinfulness of man. It is naive to suppose, as it does in its third Noble Truth, that man can be his own liberator from the selfish craving that causes all the human misery.

Buddhism is eloquent in its description and analysis of the human predicament. But when it comes to the remedy it is virtually helpless. It seeks to direct the disciple along paths of enlightenment without any reference to the possibility of any superhuman aid. All

of life's perplexing problems are resolved within the confines of human experience. God and the soul are not mentioned. There is a complete omission of anything savoring of a metaphysical theology. In his efforts to make the way simple for his disciples, Buddha over-simplified. He made it so easy that he made it impossible. He was most articulate in his analysis of the human problem, but he failed to realize that some aspects of that problem are simply too big for man.

Taoism: "The Natural Man"

Taoism joins Confucianism and Buddhism as the three great religions of China. As a philosophical system it dates back to the sixth century B. c., and it is centered in the person of Lao-tze, a Chinese philosopher who was contemporary to the prophet Jeremiah. Taoism did not develop into a religion until eight centuries later. Unlike Buddha who wrote nothing, Lao-tze created the *Tao Teb Ching,* a unique classic that has greatly influenced Chinese thought for many centuries.

Taoism gets its name from *Tao,* an old Chinese word that is as significant in the orient as *Logos* is in the Christian world. It means *the way* and could be rendered *Nature,* for the Good Man in Taoism, the man of "the way", is one who accepts Nature for what it is and lives according to it. But Tao is more than this: one can say for it about what a theist would say about God. And yet Tao is an impersonal Power that is without substance. It is the source and support of all things, but it has neither intelligence nor will. Taoism interprets suffering as the result of man's departure from the Tao state of pristine innocence and simplicity.

W. E. Soothill in *The Three Religions of China* explains the function of the Tao: "Calmly, without effort, and unceasingly, it works for good; and man by yielding himself to it, unresisting, un striving, may reach his highest well-being." In reference to man's obligation to the Tao, he says: "It would be well to give up all study and the pursuit of knowledge, and return to the absolutely simple life of Tao. War, striving, suffering, would then all cease, and, floating along the placid river of time, the individual in due course would be absorbed in the ocean of Tao."

The Tao is therefore that indescribable, invisible, inaudible, intangible something that can be interpreted many different ways. But Taoism is obviously naturalistic — a *pantheistic* naturalism. It is perhaps a naturalism after the order of Spinoza and Wordsworth rather than Einstein or Galileo. It is in its appeal to Nature (Tao) that we see its concept of the ideal man. Unlike the Western attitude, which is aggressive toward Nature, Taoism teaches that man must accept and befriend it. Huston Smith in *The Religions of Man* illustrates this point by a reference to the time that Mount Everest was scaled. In the West the common description of this feat was "the conquest of Everest." But a Taoist remarked, "We would put the matter differently. We would speak of 'the befriending of Everest.'"

Man is to be in tune with Nature. The Taoist temples emphasize this by their subdued position behind the trees or by being nestled in the hills. Huston Smith suggests that the architect, Frank Lloyd Wright, drew some of his inspiration for his unique plans from Taoism.

The basic plight of man is that he is caught up in the competitive struggle for honor, power, and wealth. He is driven by his need for social approval. Fear, worry, distrust, and sickness are the result. Unlike Buddhism which looks for a solution within man's rational powers, Taoism insists that reason is not the answer. Anxious endeavor is futile, as is man's cleverness. The answer is simple naturalness and integrity of self. They have a special word for their panacea for these ills: *wu wei.* Huston Smith renders this *creative quietude.* It means that man is to give up the silly and pathetic struggle that puts him in "a rat race" with his fellows. Instead of hectic rivalry that makes men enemies to each other, let them engage in the creative quietude that can make coexistence possible.

The Good Man realizes therefore that the compulsive pursuit of conventional goals (wealth, honor, power) is futile, and that anyone who seeks to justify such a pursuit is perverted. He is one that has come to understand and to conquer himself. He has resisted his self-centered and aggressive passions, realizing that they are the source of human misery. He accepts all things in the universe as a pattern for his own behavior. He sees Tao as "the way man should order his life to gear in with the way the universe operates." He is as "selfless as melting ice," a rather descriptive phrase in Taoistic literature. He is also like water in that he seeks the lowest level, and because he is willing to settle in the hollows that other objects struggle to avoid.

It is not therefore by self-assertion that one becomes good, but rather by *yielding.* Patience, non-violence, tolerance, impartiality, and gentleness are important virtues in Taoism, but humility is the greatest of all. By his gentleness the good man overcomes strength, and by love he is victorious over attack. Many Taoists are conscientious objectors of war.

In these respects Taoism is more like Christianity than any other non-Christian religion. Yet it is guilty of a fatal blunder. If Confucianism magnified man and overestimated his creative power in the world, Taoism minimized man's role in the light of his relationship to the vastness and majesty of Nature. It is the fallacy that runs through all naturalistic systems: *man becomes lost in the greatness of Nature, of which he is but a small part.* Naturalism fails to draw a distinction between man and matter. Man is higher than Nature and must be guided by something greater than some impersonal principle, which in Taoism becomes but another term for Nature. It is understandable that as the centuries passed Taoism became more and more enmeshed in priestcraft, idolatry, magic, mysticism, polytheism, and superstition.

Its chief interest to us is that through all the complexities of its philosophical system there shines through some penetrating insights into the character of the Good Man.

Islamic "Life of Surrender"

It is offensive to the Muslims for their religion to be called Mohammedanism, which is often the case when people of the West refer to it. The proper name is Islam, the full connotation of which is "the perfect peace that comes when one's life is surrendered to God." Mohammed is honored as the founder and the great prophet of the religion, but he is not worshiped in any such manner as Christ is worshiped by the Christians. A corresponding offense to the Christians would be to name their religion Paulism. *Muslim,* a term derived from Islam, is also an acceptable term.

Mohammed (570-632 A.D.) was a camel driver who at the age of 25 married a wealthy widow who was the owner of the caravan concern that had employed him. Being mystically inclined and terribly distraught over the decadence of Arabian culture, he began long periods of meditation in a cave on Mount Hira near Mecca. His thirst for spiritual reality was not satisfied by the desert gods of Arabia. Some of his fellow Meccans believed in a god called Allah, but even he was but one God among many they supposed. Mohammed spent years frequenting his quiet cave and communing with Allah, only to discover that Allah was the one and only true God.

Allah gave him both a commission as his prophet and a special revelation to the people. Thus came the dictum so basic to Islam: "There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his prophet!" The special revelation he received in the cave was put into writing and is known as the Koran, which, to the shame of Christians, is certainly the most memorized and perhaps the most read book in the world. It is almost as lengthy as the New Testament and is composed of some 114 chapters. Every Muslim believes it to be the infallible word of God even though, like the Christians and Jews regarding the Bible, they differ as to the *manner* of its inspiration.

What kind of man is the ideal man of Islam? He is indeed like Mohammed, for there is no higher source of moral ideals than the prophet himself. Raymund Lull, the first Christian missionary to the Muslims, affirmed that Mohammed was guilty of all the seven deadly sins and that he had none of the seven cardinal virtues. This was no doubt too strong, but it does appear probable that pride, lust, and injustice were prominent traits in his character. He used the gangster's methods of disposing of those who got in his way. Polygamy, divorce and slavery are consistent with Muslim teaching. Islamic missionaries to Africa have also been slave-traders.

A good Muslim can have as many as four wives according to the Koran, plus any number of slave-concubines. He can divorce as often as he likes and temporary marriages can be arranged. The wives are actually slaves to the men, for absolute obedience is

required and the beating of a wife is approved by the Koran. The Koran also says that all slaves taken as plunder in war becomes the lawful property of the master, and while the master is told to be kind to his slaves, slave-traffic is legislated by Islamic law and made sacred by the example of the prophet. Slaves and animals are treated alike in the Muslim ethic.

Mohammed's relations with women is anything but exemplary. Until he was fifty he had but one wife, but after her death he married eight more times. One might quote the Jews of Medina in asking, "What kind of prophet is this man who only thinks of marrying?" To quote Tor Andrae again: "Undoubtedly a prophet who declares that women and children belong to the enticements of worldly life, and who nevertheless accumulates a harem of nine wives, in addition to various slave-women, is a strange phenomenon when regarded from the standpoint of morality."

Interesting enough the Muslims also accept the divine origin of the Old and New Testaments, and they even accept the prophetic mission of Jesus and believe in his virgin birth. To be sure, Islam has been strongly influenced by both Judaism and Christianity, for it is a mixture of Jewish history, Christian theology, and Arabian mysticism. As for the Koran, it does not make for easy reading. Carlyle is quoted as saying, "It is as toilsome reading as I ever undertook, a wearisome, confused jumble, crude incondite. Nothing but a sense of duty could carry any European through the Koran." But to the Muslims it is a miracle, the only one Mohammed ever performed.

Mohammed was slower than Hitler in building up a following. His wife was his first convert, which should be a vote for his integrity. After three years he had less than forty followers, but he was not to be contained for long. Within a century after his death the Islamic empire was greater than the Roman Empire ever was, and mosques were being built in China, Spain, Persia (Iran), and India. It soon spread through the countries of northern Africa, most all of Central Asia, and even into Europe. Today one of every seven people (350 millions) are Muslims. While it is true that this conquest was by the sword, the question remains "Where did Mohammed get his sword?" How was he able to attract such loyal and fanatical followers?

Since we are primarily interested in the Islamic concept of the Good Man, we will consider only those aspects of the religion that reveal its moral standard. The standard is to be found very largely in the life of Mohammed, for Islamic ethics appear to vary but little from the pattern set by the founder himself. While there are sharp differences regarding the kind of life the prophet lived, we may consider the evaluation of Tor Andrae, a sympathetic authority on Mohammed, as at least a mild understatement: "Unfortunately it cannot be said that righteousness and straightforwardness are the most prominent traits of his character as a whole."

But the prophet's work began with a strong moral tone. His early preaching caned for repentance, and he was bitterly opposed not only because of his denunciation of Arabian idolatry, but also because his moral teachings demanded an end to the licentiousness of the people. He also called for social justice and an end of class distinctions, insisting that Allah made all men equal.

Mohammed and his disciples were at first rejected with dirt, filth, and stones. The first Muslims were imprisoned and subjected to starvation. Sometimes they were abandoned in the hot desert to die. One rather unsympathetic critic of Islam, Sir William Muir, is quoted by Huston Smith in *The Religions of Man* as conceding: "Never since the days when primitive Christianity startled the world from its sleep and waged a moral conflict with heathenism had men seen the like arousing of spiritual life — the like faith that suffered sacrifices, and took joyfully the spoiling of goods for conscience sake."

The year 622 A. D. was a big one for Mohammed and it is regarded by the Muslims as the turning point in history. It may also be viewed by this study as the point of decline in Muslim ethics, for from that time on the prophet resorted to the same carnal practices that his enemies had used against his moral revolution. The prophet became a politician, the despised preacher became a military general. That year Mohammed fled from Mecca to Medina, organized his followers into an army and soon ruled Medina. After a few years he captured Mecca, which is today Islam's holiest shrine, and finally all Arabia had accepted Allah as the one true God — converted by the sword! The prophet died in 632 A. D., but his generals (evangelists!) went on to conquer Persia, Syria, Palestine, Armenia, Turkey, Iraq, Egypt and other nations of North Africa, and even Spain before the century closed. Had it not been for the Frankish general Charles Martel, who stopped the Muslims in the Battle of Tours, the whole world might have become Muslim.

All this was of course to make man what he ought to be — an Allah-surrendered man, a man of the straight path. And what is the straight path? Here perhaps is the secret of Islamic success, for the straight path was one of certainty. By its lists of do's and don't's Islam provides assurance of right conduct. There can be no doubt if one simply does what his religion tells him, and all the requirements are spelled out in detail.

At least once in his life, but preferably several times a day, the Muslim is to say, "There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his prophet." Five times a day at stated intervals he is to pray with his face turned toward Mecca. Those who have possessions are to surrender one-fortieth each year to those who have not. One month each year, the month the prophet received his commission from Allah, the Muslim is to go on a modified fast (no food while the sun shines) so as to make him think and be more humble and more self-disciplined. Once during his lifetime he is to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. He does not gamble.

It was the prophet's first wife who said that his three greatest pleasures were praying, smelling perfumes, and women.

While even the Muslims admit the prophet's weakness for women, there is less agreement that he lived in pride and luxury once he became a conqueror. At the outset, while yet in Medina, he scorned palaces and chose to dwell in a clay house, milk his own cow and mend his own clothes. But the prophet's ascetic ways apparently were not long lasting. As W. W. Cash says in *Christendom and Islam:* "After his flight from Mecca, when more prosperous days came and Moslems sought to meet their needs by raiding surrounding tribes, there came a distinct fall in the spiritual level of the Prophet's utterances and in the idealism of his message. With the growth of temporal power and the increasing wealth of the Moslem community at Medina this decline in moral and spiritual vitality is most noticeable."

The Muslim leaders who came after Mohammed were even more greedy for wealth and power, and they plunged deeply into the pleasures of luxury and gaiety. This led to reformatory efforts within Islam that has resulted in a number of sects that endeavor to restore the spirituality of the prophet's initial utterances. One such sect was called Sufi, meaning purity, because of their spiritual goals in a dissolute age of declining Islamic morals. Another sect wears mystic girdles, which were put on and off seven times a day, using the following formula.

I tie up greediness and unbind generosity,
I tie up anger and unbind meekness,
I tie up avarice and unbind piety,
I tie up ignorance and unbind the fear of God,
I tie up passion and unbind the love of God,
I tie up hunger and unbind spiritual contentment,
I tie up Satanism and unbind Divineness.

Some of the criticisms we have leveled against Islam can certainly be made of other religions, including Christianity. After all it was so-called Christians who expelled the Jews from Spain in the fifteenth century after they had lived for generations in peace under Muslim rule. Then there is the Inquisition in which Christians disposed of heretics with the sword. And there are the Crusades staged in the name of the Prince of Peace. And there are all those religious wars of Europe fought under the banner of Christ and the church.

The Muslims complain that Western writers misrepresent them and their history, making far too much of the Islamic use of force. This may be a just complaint. They further contend that even though there are ugly spots in their long history, which is the case with all great religions, the principles of their faith are pure and the Koran is perfect. This claim would be more difficult to sustain.

The crucial question to the Christian in his search for the ideal personality in the history of thought is *what contribution does Islam make?* In its efforts to lay a foundation for an ethic, Islamic doctrine depicts Mohammed as sinless! Unlike Confucius, Mohammed himself admitted his imperfection and infallibility, which is one of the best things that can be said for him. The awful truth is that Islam is left with nothing bigger or better than Mohammed. Tor Andrae is right when he says, "We Christians are inclined to compare Mohammed with the unsurpassed and exalted figure whom we meet in the Gospels . . . And when it is measured by such a standard, what personality is not found wanting?"

What a difference the wonderful person of the Bible makes! Since it is true that no one can measure up to the character of the Christ, then perhaps Christian ethics has a point in looking to the Christ as God's illustration of the Ideal, realized by man not by means of rules and regulations or by works of supererogation, but by faith in the grace of God and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

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WHAT A SMILE SAYS

The person at whom we smile, smiles back. In one sense, he smiles at us. In a deeper sense, his smile reports the sudden well-being we have enabled him to experience. He smiles because our smile has made him feel *smile-deserving.* We have, so to speak, picked him out of the crowd. We have differentiated him and given him individualism status. — *Bonaro Overstreet*

Learn to smile on the inside. It is your FEELING that gets across to the customer's sub-conscious — not your facial expression. Consciously trying to smile by mechanically manipulating the muscles of your mouth does more harm than good. Instead, forget about your mouth and smile mentally. Imagine that you feel "smiley" inside. When you do this you are relaxed, for it is impossible to feel friendly and be tense, or to feel hostile and be relaxed. — *J. A. Kennedy*

SENECA ON OLD AGE

We should welcome old age and love it; it is full of pleasure if you know how to use it. Fruit tastes best when its season is ending; a boy is handsomest at boyhood's close; and it is the last drink which brings the toper delight, the one that submerges him and polishes off his jag. Every pleasure saves its most agreeable scene for the finale. . . Old and young alike should have death before their eyes.

I have found that the best way to get another to *acquire* a virtue, is to *impute* it to him. — Winston Churchill

Trust men and they will be true to you. — *Emerson*

The thing is to understand myself, to see what God really wished *me* to do; the thing is to find *the idea for which I can live and die. — Kierkegaard*

Not to know what has been transacted in former times is to be always a child — if no use is made of the past ages, the world must remain always in the infancy of knowledge. — *Cicero*

The best way to determine character: the moral attitude that is felt most deeply, and makes one intensely active and alive-this is the real me. — *William James*

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A PRAYER FOR A WRITER

O God, you gave me the gift and the responsibility of using words. Help me in all my writing and my speaking to be the servant of goodness, of beauty and of truth. Help me never to write or to say anything which would injure another's innocence or take another's faith away.

Help me never to write or say anything which would make that which is wrong more attractive, or which would soil the mind of anyone who reads or hears it.

Help me never to pander to that which is low, never to seek popularity at the expense of truth, never to be more concerned with sensations than with facts, and always to respect the feelings and the rights of other people.

Grant that all that I write or say to be such that it can stand the scrutiny of my own conscience, and such that I could with a clear conscience offer it to you.

This I ask for your love's sake. AMEN.

—William Barclay
More Prayers for the Plain Man